

placed in a mixing/agitation machine to uniformly mix the pre-paints. A small-batch implementation may use measurement and dispensing hardware similar to that available in commercial dispensing systems (e.g., a Corob Stratos™ dispensing system or dispensing systems such as those manufactured by Fluid Management® or GSE Dispensing, Inc.). Such hardware can be supplemented by the unique software, data, networking, and prepaint components of system 100.

System 100 may include automated manufacture of paint products in response to a customer purchase order received at a terminal 131-133. In an Internet-enabled implementation, each terminal 131-133 may be a home computer executing web browser software and connected over a network 130 (e.g., the Internet) to the base paint manufacturing computer system 121. To process request from web browsers at the computers 131-133, the computer system 121 may include web server software that responds to hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) request from the browsers. The web server software can be a process executed by the computer 121 or by another computer system 140. The web server responds to HTTP request from a web browser by sending hypertext markup language (HTML) data files (also known as web pages) to the browsers. Using web-based technologies, information can be provided to the user from a variety of different data systems 121 and 140 and the users can input data that are provided to different systems 121 and 140. This capability facilitates the implementation of distributed versions of the manufacturing system of Fig. 1.

Returning again to Fig. 200, a user can enter a paint purchase order by activating a paint purchasing function (e.g., by clicking on the "Place Order" button 251). When the paint purchase function is initiated, data may be sent to an order processing computer 140 which, in turn, results in a purchase order form being returned to the client computer 131-133 and presented to the user. Purchase order data can then be entered at the client computer by a user and returned to the purchase order processing computer 140. The purchase order data may be input using a HTML-based form and can include a quantity of paint being ordered as well as payment information and a selection of a pickup or delivery address. Payment information can include, e.g., a credit card number, a debit card number, an account identifier, or a checking account identifier. Purchase order processing computer 140 may include an interface to a credit clearing computer to process credit card transactions. After the user's